

## **HERSETH SANDLIN STATEMENT ON FUNDING TO COMBAT PINE BEETLE INFESTATION**

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**Washington, DC**

**"The damage done by pine beetles dramatically increases the risk of catastrophic wildfires, ultimately endangering the safety of rural communities, inhibiting economic growth in these communities and diminishing the role forests play in addressing climate change," Rep. Herseth Sandlin said. "This funding, in combination with the Healthy Forests Restoration Amendments Act I am introducing in the House today, will help to ensure that forest managers have tools available to keep our forests healthy for generations to come."**

**In South Dakota's Black Hills, pine beetles have affected over 200,000 acres since the 1990s, killing over 100,000 new trees each year. Nationally, federal land managers estimate that approximately 190 million acres of federal forest lands are at unnaturally high risk of catastrophic wildfire and large-scale insect and disease outbreaks due to unhealthy forest conditions.**

**The Rocky Mountain Region manages 17 national forests and 7 national grasslands throughout Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and most of South Dakota and Wyoming.**

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- Today, Rep. Herseth Sandlin praised the announcement by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will commit an additional \$40 million to address public safety concerns and forest health needs arising from the millions of acres of dead and dying trees from pine beetle infestations in Region 2, the Rocky Mountain Region, which includes the Black Hills National Forest.